



**Town of Arlington, Massachusetts**  
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## **10/17/2013 Minutes**

### **VISION 2020 FISCAL RESOURCES TASK GROUP**

Meeting Minutes 10/17/13

Town Manager's Meeting Room

ATTENDEES: Gordon Jamieson (Co-Chair), Heather Remoff, Mike Bouton (Management Analyst Town Manager's Office), Pete Howard (Secretary)

ARLINGTON VISUAL BUDGET (AVB): Mike introduced the AVB using an wall mounted laptop display. He explained that this tool, available to the public through the Town's web site, is intended to provide a better way for any resident to understand the Town's budget at various levels of detail. If a user provides a real estate tax, AVB will report how the tax is split between the various budget elements. Thus we have successfully institutionalized My Tax Dollars. AVB also shows 2 charts at each level of detail: One chart shows the history & projection and the other shows the relative size of each item. There are 3 main divisions in AVB: Revenue, Expense, Funds (Reserves) This tool was developed (pro bono) by Involution Studios which is located in the center. Mike worked closely with Involution along with several others. Gordon suggested that the projections would be more informative if best case & worst case projections were included in the charts or at minimum as part of the Annual Financial Plan. Pete suggested that the structural deficit be displayed, again either as part of the AVB or the Annual Financial Plan. Members thanked Mike for a fine presentation of an impressive tool.

TOWN DAY: Pete, David Garbarino & Brian Hasbrouck represented the FRTG at the Vision 2020 booth. We had many interesting conversations but no one signed up. We used a handout (Ref 1) which explains what we have done & would like to do.

INCUBATION: Pete & Mike Stern attended a meeting on 10/16 organized by the Town's Economic Development Director Ted Fields. Ted invited developers who might be interested in providing shared work spaces with people who might be interested in renting such spaces. There were perhaps a dozen attendees on one description or the other. Mike already uses such a facility in Cambridge but would like to use one even closer.

WATER & SEWER: The BoS approved the plan presented by DPW which includes quarterly billing & water meter replacement. Most of our recommendations in our January letter were addressed. We need to see what the DPW does with the one time cash flow bonanza that will result from quarterly billing. We might also follow up on new uses for the automated and digitized water meter data.

NEXT MEETING: Nov 21 - Meetings held monthly, 3rd Thursdays, Senior Center 2nd Flr Mtg Room.

Ref 1 FRTG Town Day Handout.

Vision 2020

Fiscal Resources Task Group

Town Day - September 21, 2013

2013-2014 Projects

### **FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY**

Explore options to address Arlington's structural deficit\* through development as an alternative to periodic Proposition 2 1/2 overrides and/or service reductions

Monitor discussion of the land value tax\*\* as an equitable way to encourage development

Review the Town's Financial Plan: Educate FRTG membership therein –  
Comment on and suggest ways for the Town leadership to further improve the financial efficiency of operations

### **MY TAX DOLLARS - TO BE RELEASED WINTER 2013-2014**

Update spreadsheet for posting on Town website allowing individual homeowner to see exactly where how his/her real estate tax is distributed across the Town departments

## WATER & SEWER BILLING OPTIONS - COMPLETED

Complete gathering of information on current billing and collection practices.

Develop enhanced billing/collection options for consideration by Town leadership

Come join us

Our next meeting is October 17th at 7:30 PM

Senior Center Conference Room 2nd Floor

Contact

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\*Annual increase in expense to maintain services compared to annual increase in revenue

\*\*Tax rate on land much greater than tax rate on improvements.

Henry George (1839-1897) is best known proponent